

# N E W S R E L E A S E

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## **New federal requirements for long-term unemployed to continue receiving unemployment benefits**

### ***Includes in-person office appointments for job services and eligibility assessment***

**SACRAMENTO** – More than 500,000 of California's long-term unemployed will be required to appear at local One-Stop Career Centers over the next seven months to learn about employment services offered by the state Employment Development Department (EDD) and local partner organizations, and to verify that they are complying with the eligibility requirements for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits.

The new appointment requirement is part of a reauthorization of four tiers of federal extension benefits signed by President Obama in February. The legislation also requires individuals collecting federal extension benefits after they run out of regular state unemployment benefits to:

- Document their work search efforts, which now must include contacts with at least three employers a week;
- Provide their documentation upon request to the EDD; and
- Ensure they are registered in EDD's CalJOBS, California's online job listing and resume service, by entering or updating their resume in the system.

While all unemployed workers collecting extension benefits must now meet these requirements, the new mandatory Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) appointments apply only to those people beginning a first tier of extended benefits or transitioning to the second tier with a claim starting on or after March 25, 2012.

Claimants could lose their benefits if they fail to appear for their appointment or fail to comply with other requirements of the law, including the work search documentation and registration in CalJOBS.

"While these requirements are federally mandated, bringing in many long-term unemployed individuals for personal appointments will connect them with One-Stop Career Center services designed to help them secure an appropriate job as quickly as possible," EDD Director Pam Harris said. "It will also further ensure that recipients of unemployment benefits are actively seeking work."

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The EDD began mailing packets last week to claimants just starting a first or second federal extension tier of unemployment benefits. Those who started such an extension between March 25 and now will receive their notices over the next few months. The packets include:

- A notice informing the UI recipient of an appointment date and time at a designated One-Stop Career Center near them;
- An eligibility assessment questionnaire designed to capture details on the individual's work search efforts and parameters; and
- An instruction sheet about the assessment appointment process and how the individual should prepare, including directions on how to complete certain requirements online at the claimant's discretion that will help them better prepare for the REA appointment.

At the appointments, the One-Stop staff will review UI claimants' work search efforts and determine whether they meet all eligibility requirements for continued unemployment benefits.

The staff will also provide:

- Information about job and training services available through the One-Stop Career Centers and partner organizations.
- Labor market and career information to help make career decisions.
- Assessments of skill level, aptitude, and individual abilities.

The EDD estimates about 650,000 Californians will qualify for Tier 1 and Tier 2 federal extension benefits between March 2012 and the end of the year, when the federal extension program is scheduled to end. About 20 percent of these recipients, primarily people who live a long distance from designated One-Stop Career Centers, will not be required to appear for a personal appointment but will have alternative options for skill assessments and job search assistance. That leaves an estimated half-million Californians who will receive REA notices for in-person appointments.

If a claimant can't attend a scheduled appointment, he/she should contact their designated One-Stop Career Center and request a new appointment within one week. Failure to do so can disqualify the individual from collecting any further unemployment benefits.

An estimated 1.1 million people are currently receiving unemployment benefits in California. Another 720,399 claimants have exhausted all of their available benefits between February 2010 and now.

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The four tiers of federal extension benefits with an additional FED-ED benefit tier, combined with the 26 weeks of regular payments, had provided a total of up to 99 weeks of unemployment benefits. However, with the elimination of the FED-ED extensions last month, the new maximum total of benefits for most recipients is now up to 79 weeks. Beginning in September, the maximum total will be further reduced to up to 73 weeks of benefits. The potential maximum amount of extended benefit weeks is not available to everyone depending on when they filed their first regular UI claim and subsequent extension claims.

The four federal extension tiers will continue through the end of the year. If they are not renewed again by Congress, unemployment benefits will return to a limit of up to 26 weeks, the regular pre-recession maximum.

For any further updates on the REA program, Unemployment Insurance requirements, as well information on all other EDD programs and services, we encourage our customers to visit our website at [www.edd.ca.gov](http://www.edd.ca.gov) as well as our EDD [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

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